8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926

NN23 Sea Islanders NN23

South Carolina

695 A case in point will be enlightening. Here is a verbatim account" of the testimony in a suit brought in connection with a collision between two sail-boats in a heavy fog. The defendant asserted that no warning of any kind had been given.

695 539 197 "That is not so," the plaintiff declared. "My lookout gave warning in ample time; he hailed you long before you struck, and ran us down; you had ample warning."

The lookout was summoned, a black man, sphinx-like, silent.

"You called out to the defendant the moment you saw him through the fog?"

"Me yerre um; no shum; *too* long buffo' me shum, me yerre um.""

"And the moment you heard them you sang out, is that not so?"

A grave nod assented.

The plaintiff rested his case; the cross-examination began:

"You hailed the sloop before you could see her; could they hear you hail?"

A succinct nod.

"How do you know?"

"Me yerre dem; dem blan fuh yerre we; yez yerre yondeh senkah yerre yuh.""

"You hailed them then?"

"Me duh holleh."

"That is what I mean: you hailed the on-coming vessel?"

"Me yent no sicarum; me holleh one patty-augah.""

"Very well. And what did you say?"

"Me say, 'Oonah konnou oonah?'"

Which is equivalent, in Gullah, to *"Whose boat is that?"* The records will show the outcome of the case; the writer has not the verdict recorded.

197 Again, in briefer scope, a deer hunter asked an old darkey if a certain stand was a good one for deer. "Me yent kin say, mossa," replied the old man, "W'en oona duh de-dey, de dee' duh no de-day; w'en oona yent dey, de dee' duh de-dey." That is, "When one is there, the deer is not there; when one is not there, the deer is there."

191 It is only fair to say that the low-country darkeys are

"Bennett I, 340, 341.

""I heard him (them); I didn't see him (them); *too* long *before* I saw him (them); I heard him (them)."

"I heard them; they (were) obliged to hear us; ears hear yonder same as hear here."